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## THE BRIGHT SPOT IN THE HAGUE CONFERENCE

THE "economic conference" convening at The Hague is referred to in some quarters of our country as a "humbug." It is largely that. The resumption of industry and commerce in Europe, peace, cannot be secured by coquetting with the Russian terrorists. Russia's army, repudiation of debts and private property, confiscations, and tragic failure to run her own affairs do not, cannot commend her as a possible co-operating sister in the society of nations.

Furthermore, if Britain despairs over Ireland, America wonders over Europe. It is difficult to see what the conference at The Hague can accomplish, so messy is the mess. Evidently Lloyd-George favors an emasculated Russia in order that English interests may obtain and control industrial concessions over the vast stretches of Russia's enormous resources. On the other hand, Poincaré would have a virile Russia capable of paying the debts Russia owes to the French people. Evidently Germany is not to sit in the conference. The Soviets will meet at The Hague, but only as a private party. Belgium seems to treat the whole affair with a degree of hauteur. Some of the nations are sending plenipotentiaries with powers to negotiate treaties; others economic experts only, with no such powers. With such mixed representation the conference at The Hague can be little better than impotent. Because of these facts the semi-official *Washington Post* of June 14 referred to the whole affair as follows:

"A grotesque, a ridiculous, and at the same time a sad spectacle is presented at The Hague. The times are tragic, and the world needs giants as never before; yet Europe has gone to seed in greatness. Her governments are destitute of statesmanship. The futility and confusion of their plans are pitiful, and most pitiful of all is the mixture of bravado and duplicity which constitutes the false front of the pretentious humbug at The Hague."

There is, however, one hopeful thing about the conference. It is meeting at The Hague. Anything that draws men to that place, that calls again the attention of the world to the land of William the Silent and of Hugo Grotius, whose bodies rest now side by side in Delft, to The Hague of the International Conference of 1899 and of that other and larger gathering of 1907, is pat and worth while. No one can study that capital of Holland without catching something of those vital and enduring things at the heart of any successful international achievement. The men meeting at The Hague will not be able to reconcile communism with the ways of civilized society. Those two things will not mix. The attempt to mix them at Genoa failed. There is no alchemy by which they can be made to merge at The Hague. But if those men will allow themselves to medi-

tate there upon what the world has already done there, some little good may be accomplished.

## THE RED VICTORY

THE GENOA CONFERENCE, opening April 10 and closing May 19, is now revealed as little more or less than a Russian victory. Rather flippantly conceived as an attempt to unite the divergent European interests, it has tragically achieved the opposite. The conference was opposed by France and by an influential portion of the English press. There was no co-operation of equal States. Statesmanship did not rise above political intrigue. All reference to interallied debts, reparations, and disarmament were officially excluded from the deliberations, although they had to be the main subjects of practically every unofficial conversation. When the allied experts presented their claims against Russia, Russia presented counter-claims showing a balance due to Russia of some ten billions of dollars. And then there appeared the Treaty of Rappallo between Germany and Russia, by the terms of which Germany gave *de jure* recognition to the so-called Soviet Republic, both renounced the public and private war claims against each other, and each granted to the other most-favored-nation privileges. Whereupon Lloyd-George gave voice to his "fear of a hungry Russia equipped by an angry Germany." Certain it is that the Russian revolutionary army is a constant threat against Poland, Roumania, and the other border States. In the meantime, Russia, having gained an ally in Germany, has walked away with an enormous amount of free advertising. National suspicion and despair, fear and hate, were probably never more widespread in Europe than today. The Genoa Conference seems to have increased them all. But Russia has lost nothing.

The intelligence of Europe needs to be strengthened to renew its efforts toward a stabilization of the currencies, a return to a gold standard for Europe, a balance of the budgets, the devaluation of currencies where such devaluation is inevitable, the end of artificial control of exchange. The adoption of the recommendations of the financial commission, the encouragement of the conference of central banks in London, and the enlargement of that developing European zollverein typified by the International Trade Corporation, registered in Great Britain, interested to achieve a financial reconstruction, especially in eastern Europe, and such other seemingly hopeful efforts as the British Trade Facilities Act, these things are all very essential ingredients of any American hope in Europe.

But the Genoa Conference—that still appears as little more than an organized publicity bureau for Soviet Russia.